

Sex," the writer is very conservative, although accepting the chromosomal theory in the main. While the experiments of Kammerer and Pavlov are mentioned, no opinion is ventured beyond the need of further confirmation. The writer states that he is extremely dubious as to whether the phenomena of Xenia have any real basis. Surely this has been clearly shown in maize where, for instance, a starchy dominant factor in the pollen will cause the endosperm tissue of what would otherwise be a sugary ear to become starchy. But this is a minor point. On the determination of sex the writer explains the chromosome hypothesis and that of Goldschmidt in a very readable and lucid manner.

It is the final chapter on Fertility that will appeal the most to eugenisists. Dr. Marshall in a few pages brings Malthusianism up to date. That fertility, like sterility, is inherited he has no doubt, and he states that the remarkable industrial developments of the Victorian era which discounts to such a great extent the postulates of Malthus, are not likely to be repeated. Undoubtedly the problem must be faced, and he fears that "it will be a question which will arouse some of the deepest instincts and emotions of men, and feeling may run as passionately as in earlier struggles between religions." In this connection occasional notes, such as on page 40, concerning contraception are not without interest.

A great deal of the value of the book lies in the fact that the subject is treated from a comparative point of view. The agricultural student will get as much out of it as the medical, but the philosophical will get the most.

F. A. E. CREW.

Rutgers, J., M.D. *Eugenics and Birth Control*. Translated by Clifford Coudray, L.Sc. R. A. Giesecke, Dresden—A 24. Price

AN English translation of Dr. Rutgers's "Rassenverbesserung," which first appeared in 1908 as a translation of a somewhat earlier Dutch edition, has long been wanted, and we are glad to see that it has at last been done, although it would have perhaps been better from the scientific standpoint that it should have appeared under the literal title "Race Improvement," as the heredity aspect of the question is not as strongly stressed as many Eugenists would wish.

Dr. Rutgers was the devoted pioneer of practical birth-control instruction. It was he, as secretary of the Dutch Neo-Malthusian League, who undertook the training of midwives and other women in the application of the occlusive device invented by the eminent Danish gynecologist Dr. Mensinga of Flensburg, and before his death last year Dr. Rutgers had the satisfaction of seeing over fifty of these women carrying on this work among the poor in all the large centres in Holland, with apparently the most satisfactory consequences, both from the individual and national standpoint. Those who had the privilege of knowing him and seeing his almost ascetic devotion to the cause, and his intensely sympathetic nature, will appreciate the opportunity of reading this, his most important book. Some may regard it as too much of a mixture of science and sentiment, but the sentiment is at least sane and noble, and there is enough of sound scientific doctrine to render the work of great value.

In the introduction the author puts forward, as his great aim, the securing of the "physiological optimum" for the human race, which implies the provision of all conditions which conduce to health, as well as securing the best types of human beings to enjoy them. This may be regarded as a medical presentation of the Utilitarian moral goal, and has the advantage of being capable of fairly definite expression in the mean duration of life, which the present writer has put forward as the measure of national morality, and which affords a very comforting contradiction to the frequent accusations of moral decadence.

The book commences with a justification of what is now known as birth-control from the standpoint of the individual—the man, the woman, and the children. Here the author's experience as a sympathetic family physician enables him to give vivid illustrations of the evils of large families among the poor—deliberate neglect of infants in order to reduce the burden or even to secure insurance benefit. "*La peur de l'enfant*" which is commonly attributed only to those who adopt birth-control, existed long before it was heard of. Dr. Rutgers shows how birth-control can be directed towards a steady improvement of the individual and family, he disposes of the various objections to it, and especially of the charge that it is medically injurious, and he calls attention to the importance of refraining from parenthood in all cases of hereditary taint.

The second and third parts deal with the social and national aspect of the question, and here and in an appendix, Dr. Rutgers gives us some useful statistics showing how the decline of the birth-rate in various countries is accompanied by a nearly corresponding decline in the general and infantile mortality, and therefore an increase of the average longevity and approach to the "physiological optimum." He disposes also of the continual outcry that birth-control is producing depopulation in France. Dr. Rutgers is not completely in agreement with the doctrine of Malthus, and his economics show a socialistic bias, but he makes it quite clear that over-reproduction leads to insufficiency of subsistence.

In the fourth part on "Birth Control and Heredity" the author gives a good outline of the doctrines of Darwin, Weissmann, and Lamarck, and takes up an intermediate position, admitting the great importance of heredity and careful selection, but insisting on the dysgenic effects of bad environment, and calling for both good selection and good environment as essential for race-improvement. Although he attributes greater importance to environment than would be conceded by many Eugenists, his arguments are worthy of attention, and in any case he demonstrates the powerful assistance which birth-control can give to eugenic selection. As he quotes from Dr. Alfred Ploetz; "to brand birth-control as immoral as is so often done, is simply to open the door wide to unhealthy contra-selection."

Dr. Rutgers's book supplies, better than any other we know of, the answers to the various questions which present themselves to those who are concerned with the vital problem of birth control, and we sincerely hope that it will be widely read in our country, which is sadly in need of the benign influence he has exercised in Holland.

C. V. DRYSDALE.